

“He perceived no iniquity in Yaakov, and saw no perversity in Yisrael. Hashem, his G-d is with him.” (23:21)

Bilaam tried hard to find something iniquitous about the Jewish People – to no avail. This *pasuk* is the Scriptural exhortation to look for the positive in every person. While it is clearly the right thing to do, it is often difficult to ferret out the positive when there is so much negativity staring us in the face. The **Admor m’Mishkoltz, Shlita**, interprets this *pasuk* in a novel manner. (If) he perceives no iniquity – if he looks for a justifiable rationale for a behavior which appears nefarious, then he will ultimately discover that “his G-d is with him.” Every Jew has that Jewish spark within him. While in some it appears to burn with greater intensity than in others, we all have the “Hashem-component” within us. In some, it is just buried deeper.

A group of concerned members of his community approached the *Mishkoltzer* during *Chol Ha’moed Pesach* with a complaint concerning a Jewish storekeeper in Petach Tikvah. Apparently, he was selling *chametz* on *Pesach*. While this may seem difficult to accept, it does happen. For those who are unaware – not all Jews are observant. The *Rebbe* was greatly distressed and said that he would pay the storekeeper a visit.

The *Rebbe* went to the store and remained outside. He called to the storekeeper, “*Tzaddik, Pesach kasher v’sameach*, ‘Righteous person, (I wish you) a *kosher* and happy *Pesach*.’”

When the storekeeper beheld the presence of the *Rebbe*, bedecked in his *Yom Tov* finery, his countenance shining, he immediately ran to the front of the store. When he came over, the *Rebbe* placed his hand on his shoulder and asked, “How are you, *tzaddik*?”

The man immediately countered, “Why do you call me a *tzaddik*? I am anything but righteous. Look at me; you will see that I do not even resemble a righteous person.”

“Do not say this,” the *Rebbe* said. “Every Jew is a child of the Patriarchs; thus, he has righteousness imbued within him.”

So the *Rebbe* began and continued until he had explained the laws of *Pesach* to the man – after which, he promptly shuttered his store for the rest of the Festival.

It all depends on how one approaches another Jew. If he looks for “signs” of G-d within him – he will surely discover them.